

6-Month AFRICA

IMMERSION

experience **mission**





What is **IMMERSION?**

IMMERSION is an opportunity for young adults (age 18-30) to step outside of the normal cadence of their lives in order to gain a broader picture of: 1) the world around you, 2) the way God works in that world, and 3) the value of relationships and quality service alongside people whose lives are just as valuable as your own.

Simply put, **IMMERSION** is about focusing on the “how we do it” of international ministry and service rather than just “what we do.” Our central focus is on the importance of **authentic relationships** as the keystone to healthy ministry, and engaging in what it means to truly “love our neighbor” as people of privilege in the 21st century.

Teams spend their time equally split between service opportunities, cultural immersion in the community, and relationship building with community partners and host families. This means there is plenty of space to give your time and attention to others—a necessary part of doing missions well—prioritizing people over the simply seeking out projects to complete.



EM AFRICA *Partners*



6-Month Africa IMMERSION teams will be serving in South Africa, Lesotho, and Namibia under the direction of local partners and EM Africa Directors, **Hein & Helene van Wyk** (with past IMMERSION team member above), and EM Africa support staff, **Danieko & Megan van Wyk** (above right).

The van Wyk's are native Namibians, but they have lived and served in South Africa for more than 20 years, holding dual citizenship. They have been working with Experience Mission since 2011, since the very beginning of the IMMERSION program, and now also lead trips for two-week mission teams in South Africa and Namibia.



Over the years, Hein and Helene have made incredible partnerships all over Southern Africa, including Kairos, where your team will serve and learn for the month.



CENTURION/PRETORIA

SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY PARTNERS

Kairos has many different outreaches and invests in their local community of Pretoria East. Teams connect with school-aged children, serving meals at school, helping at after-school programs, working as teachers' assistants, and more.

Your team will serve with the **food and clothing distribution center**, helping to sort clothing donations and pack food bags to distribute to the communities in need. You may also be involved in working with the elderly and individuals experiencing homelessness.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

Monday through Friday, you can expect to volunteer at Kairos from 8:00am to 4:30-5:30pm. **Saturday** mornings to **Sunday** afternoons will be spent debriefing at the van Wyk's home, for downtime to

relax and be together as a team and having access to WiFi. The van Wyks love rugby, coffee, and have a swimming pool in their backyard! Pack a swimsuit if you are there in the warmer months (South Africa's seasons are opposite to the US!)

You may or may not attend a weekly church service on Sundays. This will be determined by the EM Africa staff as they solidify your specific trip itinerary.

HOUSING & ACCOMMODATIONS

You will be staying with local host families in Centurion. All families have been vetted by the van Wyks, and most have hosted participants for 10+ years. Housing accommodations are comfortable, with a bed and a shared bathroom & shower. You may be in a host home with another team member or by yourself.

**Locations and schedules are subject to change*



MAPHUTSENG

LESOTHO

MINISTRY PARTNERS

Growing Nations is an organization focused on conservative agriculture and “Farming God’s Way.” They have a property in the mountains of Lesotho known as “the base” where they host yearly resident students to learn these farming methods and take back to their own villages, with a goal of restoring the land in Lesotho, from centuries of erosion largely caused by the introduction of the plow.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

Through part of your time here, your team will work on the demonstration plots on Growing Nations’ property, helping to harvest, plant, or prep the fields.

Team members have an incredible opportunity to develop deep and meaningful relationships with the staff as well as the **resident**

students living and learning at Growing Nations.

For one period of 7-10 days during this time, team members will **stay at the homes of students**, back in their mountain villages, to help them implement what they’re learning at Growing Nations.

HOUSING & ACCOMMODATIONS

On the Growing Nations property, team members will stay together as a team. Bunk beds are provided. Shared bathroom and showers divided by gender.

The home stays with Growing Nations students are probably the most culturally distinct, remote, and **rustic** experience during the entirety of your 6 months, with little to no access to running water, electricity, and Wifi while in the mountain villages.

**Locations and schedules are subject to change*



SWAKOPMUND

NAMIBIA

MINISTRY PARTNERS

Pastor JP and his family look forward to hosting IMMERSION teams every year at **Shofar Church!**

Team members serve this community in a few different ways. First, they come alongside Shofar by getting involved in their **youth ministry** and helping fill volunteer spots on Sunday mornings during church services. The team will also serve a “**baby house,**” similar to a daycare/preschool, helping the small staff team care for the children, play, and help around the facility.

Teams will also be heavily involved in the **local craft market**. The market ministry is not structured, but rather takes initiative on the team’s part to find where they want to get plugged in and build relationships.

“Swakop” is a tourist destination with beautiful scenery and easy access to wifi, and potential to do some fun activities in your downtime!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

Your team will volunteer **Monday - Friday**, with weekends used to debrief and attend church. You will spend some of your time at the baby house or at the local market during the day and serve at the local church some evenings and **Sundays**.

HOUSING & ACCOMMODATIONS

In Swakopmund, the team stays together at a **local church**, where you will prepare your own meals. A unique part of this community is that your main mode of transportation will be **bicycles!** (provided by EM Africa)



**Locations and schedules are subject to change*



SAFETY

Measures

Safety is a huge priority for the IMMERSION program! We are up to date on all potential **safety concerns** in the countries where teams volunteer and would never send a team to a location where we have active concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

Experience Mission local staff and partners are **experienced residents** or welcome guests in the communities you are serving in, and they communicate to all team members the **safest way** to move about during their time on the program. Regular communication is also established between partners, team leaders, and EM U.S. Staff, allowing for quick responses to any emergencies should they arise.

For medical issues, IMMERSION team leaders are **CPR/ First Aid** certified, and carry **trauma medical kits** equipped to deal with a wide range of injuries and ailments.

In the case of a larger emergency, EM staff members will **support team members** by helping them communicate with home and making sure they get to a place to receive care.

Often, local **medical clinics** are a short distance from where team members are staying. However, outside of big cities, large hospitals can often be several hours away by vehicle. Team members would not be left to do this on their own.

To ensure medical care is readily accessible, EM secures **travel medical/ evacuation insurance** for all team members. Participants are also required to come with a **Personal Emergency Fund**—a debit or credit card with \$1,500 available and \$300 of reserve cash—in case they were to have a medical issue requiring upfront payment or need to **travel home** from the program unexpectedly. This amount may seem high, but it's

purely a precaution. Most team members do not touch their emergency funds while on the trip.

Preventatively, during initial training, all team members are encouraged to enroll with **STEP** (Safe Traveler Enrollment Program) through the U.S. State Department. This allows team members and staff to receive official travel alerts if there is an issue in the region including political protests, civil unrest, increased crime, weather alerts, natural disasters, terrorism, or specific threats for foreign travelers.

An **emergency phone line** is also available to all emergency contacts.